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ducted to the close without farther disturbance, and the Ministers and people were allowed to attend to their spiritual concerns, and to retire home at last, in perfect safety. The dispensation of religious ordinances in such circumstances, is so singular in modern times, and calculated to give such a peculiar cast to devotional feelings and exercises, that many of your readers may take an interest in this simple record of my own experience, and that of my Christian friends who were involved in the same difficulties.

E.

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN IRELAND.

NO. III.—REIGN OF EDWARD VI.

HENRY VIII. departed this life in 1546, and was succeeded by his son Edward VI., whose mother was Jane Seymour.—This young Prince came to the throne at the age of nine years, and died a minor; so that the public acts of his reign were rather those of his ministers. Though from the amiableness of his disposition, it may be fairly conjectured, “that time only was wanting to his fame,” yet owing to his extreme youth, his personal character could have little or no influence upon the measures of government. The Duke of Somerset was appointed Protector during the minority; and was, during a considerable part of this reign, the main spring of public affairs. A council was, indeed, associated with him, but by the enegry of his character, he managed them so, that for several years he regulated affairs according to his own pleasure. Happily for the cause of religion, this accomplished and powerful statesman threw all the weight of his influence into the scale of liberal opinions. Being a warm friend to the Reformation, he earnestly set himself to correct the numerous errors which prevailed in the national church. In this task, he found a willing and able auxiliary in Archbishop Cranmer. During the preceding reign, little in the way of reform had been accomplished. With the exception of the transfer of the supremacy from the Pope to the King, the alteration in religion was but trifling. Whatever changes did occur, were made chiefly to gratify the inclination, or promote the ambition of the monarch. The people of England outran the Prince in their desire for Reformation; but they were restricted in the expressions of their wishes. Terrified by Henry’s arbitrary and tyrannical disposition, his subjects were obliged carefully to conceal any objections they might have to the system which he was pleased to adopt. His death re-

moved these obstacles to free inquiry. Men began to speak out their sentiments on the subject of religion, with openness and freedom; and a thirst for information was prevalent among the people. In this state of things, Somerset found it easy to go on with his plans of reformation; and, aided by Cranmer, he proceeded to institute a visitation of churches and a correction of abuses. The practice of confession, which had been hitherto strictly enforced, was now left optional. Images were now entirely removed from churches; Priests were allowed to marry; the ancient mass was abolished; and a new Liturgy, in which various abuses were corrected, was drawn up, which, with the exception of a few alterations, is the same with that now in use. Though there was some opposition to these alterations, and though even commotions and insurrections were, through the influence of popish ecclesiastics, excited in various places, yet the government found little difficulty in suppressing them; and the arrangements respecting religion, were received with approbation by the majority of the people.

In this reign, as in the preceding, measures were taken to extend to Ireland, the religious improvements of England.—The reception, however, which they met with, exhibited a striking contrast between the two countries. In England, the reformed doctrines were received with ardour and alacrity. In Ireland, they were regarded with aversion and horror.—This aversion was more strongly felt, and more warmly expressed in the present reign than even in the preceding. The additional changes and innovations which took place, rendered the reformed system still more displeasing, to a bigotted and prejudiced people; and this displeasure they hesitated not to express more freely, being less influenced by fear during the minority of the Prince, than under the sway of his stern and tyrannical predecessor. Had all the laws of Henry VIII. on the subject of religion, been founded in wisdom, and administered with discretion, it would, notwithstanding, have acquired a great length of time, to give them effect among a people so ignorant and bigotted as those of Ireland. But as many of these laws originated in caprice, and were administered with folly, the reformed Clergy made little progress in the religious instruction of the people. Of the zeal and ability of Archbishop Brown, the principal instrument in the work, there cannot be a doubt. But he had to contend with many formidable obstacles. Many of the Clergy of his diocese, as has been already stated, resigned their livings, rather than acknowledge the King's supremacy; and to fill up their places with qualified persons, was extremely difficult. To find native Pastors, able and willing to

spread the reformed doctrines, was impossible : while the English Clergy had to encounter prejudice and hatred, and from their ignorance of the Irish language, were altogether unsuited to the wants of the people. Even within the English pale, notwithstanding all the laws passed for its suppression in the preceding reign, the Irish language was still currently spoken. To the native Irish, then, even in the most favourable situations, the English Clergy were but nominal Pastors ; whom, at best, they were only inclined to tolerate, and in many instances, they regarded with aversion. To the partisans of Rome, on the contrary, every thing was favourable. They inculcated upon their countrymen, the religion of their forefathers ; they addressed them also in their own language, and were listened to with reverence and affection. While such was the state of things even in places within the pale of English law, little improvement could be expected in districts beyond it. In these, the system of Popery remained virtually the same, as before the Reformation. The Pope exercised the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the appointment of Bishops, as if the King of England had never claimed supremacy. In several Sees, the government did not even attempt to exercise the right of nomination ; in others, as certainly as they appointed a Bishop, the Church of Rome set up a competitor. In these places, the people treated the Reformed Clergy, with utter indifference and neglect, and regarded the laws respecting religion, as matters in which they had no concern. Such was the deplorable lack of religious instruction in this country, and the total inadequacy of the means employed to disseminate the principles of the Reformation. Two sentences written by a Chancellor of England, during this reign, describe the deficiency of the means of instruction, better than could be done by pages of declamation.—“ Hard it is,” saith he, “ that men should know their duties to God, and to the King, when they shall not hear teaching or preaching throughout the year.” And again, “ Preaching we have none, which is our lack, without which the ignorant can have no knowledge.”

It was to a people in this state of ignorance, bigotry, and prejudice, that the English Liturgy, and the various plans of reform adopted in England, were now to be tendered. Sir Anthony Saintleger, an experienced and able statesman, who had before filled the office of chief Governor of Ireland, was appointed at this crisis, to carry these measures into effect.—He accordingly came to Ireland in the capacity of Lord Deputy, and charged with full powers to assemble the Irish Parliament. Some historians, in treating of this period, have accused the Deputy of remissness, with respect to the reli-

gious concerns of the nation, and have censured him for attending chiefly to the administration of civil affairs. But to an impartial and unprejudiced inquirer, the justice of the censure will appear questionable. Such a statesman was, perhaps, the fittest for Ireland at that juncture. To bring the people within the pale of English law, and to extend the blessings of good government, were essential requisites; whilst, on the contrary, to force the English system of Reformation on a people ignorant of the English language, and not amenable to English laws, was the height of extravagance and folly.

Influenced, perhaps, by a fear of exciting dissensions, the enlightened Governor did not exercise his power of summoning a Parliament. On the subject of religion, a different and more prudential course was adopted. The royal proclamation addressed to the Irish Clergy, was transmitted; requiring them to receive and adopt the Liturgy, recently agreed upon in England. The proclamation was expressed in guarded, and in some degree, in disingenuous terms. It stated that the prayers of the church had been translated into the vulgar tongue, for the benefit the people. Nothing was said with respect to alterations in the prayers, or changes in the doctrines. The people were led to infer that they were merely receiving the Popish services, in an English dress. This proclamation, the Deputy wisely resolved to submit to the Prelates and Clergy, before giving it general circulation. In proposing it for their consideration, he recommended it to their acceptance, as having the sanction of the King, the Government, and Clergy of England, and as possessing intrinsic excellence. This proposal of the Lord Deputy, met with a very unexpected and determined opposition, from John Dowdal, Primate of Armagh. It would seem as if all plans of improvement emanating from England, in the earlier times of the Reformation, were destined to be opposed in that quarter. The vehement opposition of Cromer, has already been recorded. After his death, a few years previous to this, a person named Robert Waucop. had been appointed by the Pope, as his successor. Henry VIII. however, upon the recommendation of Saintleger, who was at that time also Lord Deputy, superseded the Pope's appointment, and nominated John Dowdal, a native of Ireland, to the vacant Primacy. If, however, Saintleger, or his master, calculated on the services of Dowdal, as no doubt they did, they were greatly disappointed. He had, indeed, upon receiving his appointment, acknowledged the King's supremacy; but this act seems to have been considered by him as a mere matter of form.—Trained up in habits of subserviency to the Romish Church,

he appears to have considered her entitled to implicit obedience, and to have regarded any attack on her authority, as the height of impiety.

To defend what he alleged to be her rights, he therefore scrupled not to oppose his patron, and to risk his own temporal interest. He immediately objected to the reception of the Liturgy; and the nature of his objections merits attention, as manifesting that spirit of Priestly domination, for which the Romish Clergy have been generally distinguished. The adoption of a Liturgy in the vulgar tongue, he said, would enable every illiterate fellow to say mass. The answer of the Lord Deputy to this objection was worthy of an enlightened statesman. It was to be regretted, he said, that so many of the Clergy were as ignorant of the language in which they were accustomed to say mass, as the people whom they pretended to instruct; but that the adoption of this Liturgy, which communicated the services of the Church in the mother tongue, would be useful both to the Clergy and the people. To this Dowdal retorted, in a style of argument which has been common in the Romish Church, and which has seldom failed to silence those whom it could not convince. He warned him to beware of the Clergy's curse. Some further discussion ensued, after which Dowdal left the assembly, and was followed by the greater number of his suffragans.—Archbishop Brown and five other Bishops, Staples of Meath, Lancaster of Kildare, Travers of Leighlin, and Coyne of Limerick, agreed forthwith to adopt the Liturgy. It afterwards received a most solemn sanction, by being read in the cathedral of Christ's Church, Dublin, in presence of the Lord Deputy, the reformed Clergy, and the Magistrates.

But though the plans of reform proposed by the English Government were thus formally recognized by the Ministry and Royal party, they experienced a determined and increasing opposition from the bulk of the nation. To this opposition, the hostility expressed by Dowdal and the Northern Clergy greatly contributed. It tended, at once, to increase their popularity and to establish the people in their attachment to Popery. Nor must it be disguised that the conduct of the persons appointed to remove relics and images from the Churches, contributed to the same effect. Their employment, which was at best invidious, they rendered much more so, by exceeding their commission. Influenced by wantonness, or rapacity, they carried off and set up to sale the various ornaments of the churches. A variety of articles, not only harmless but even necessary, were removed from the places of worship; such as books, bells, windows, plate, and other essential articles. To such an extent was the dilapidation

tion carried, that a public prohibition was at last issued against the sale of the articles removed. In the meantime, whilst Sir Anthony Saintleger was engaged in prudently administering the civil affairs of the nation, he was suddenly and unexpectedly recalled. This measure was owing to the over-zeal of Archbishop Brown, who accused him to the English Government of remissness respecting ecclesiastical affairs; ascribing to this the opposition of Dowdal and the Northern Clergy. The successor of Saintleger was Sir James Crofts, whose first care, on his arrival in Ireland, was to endeavour to conciliate Dowdal, who was now regarded by common consent, as the great champion of the Romish Church. He had retired in discontent to Saint Mary's Abbey, in the suburbs of Dublin; keeping aloof equally from all intercourse with the Government, and with his conforming brethren. In this situation he received a letter from the new Deputy, reminding him of the allegiance which he owed to the King; an allegiance sanctioned by the precepts of the Gospel, and recognized, at various times, by the Popes themselves. The letter then went on to state, that the Deputy would feel great pleasure in contributing to a reconciliation between the Primate and his brethren; and recommended him to appoint some place where a conference might be held respecting ecclesiastical affairs, with a view to an amicable adjustment, and to prevent the issuing of new and more severe orders from the English Government. To this communication Dowdal replied, that he could have no hope of any thorough reconciliation; the points at issue being matters of conscience, and the judgment of the parties being totally opposite. At the same time, he declared his readiness to try the experiment proposed by the Deputy; adding, that he should be glad to meet him, but must decline appearing at his palace, having lived much of late in retirement, from which he was not disposed to emerge. Though this answer was conceived in terms sufficiently haughty, the Deputy prudently overlooked this circumstance; and the Clergy were enjoined to attend upon the Primate. A meeting accordingly took place in the great hall of the Abbey, and a formal controversy ensued. Dowdal defended the Romish mass; and Staples, Bishop of Meath, vindicated the reformed mode of worship. From such a procedure little good could be expected. Each party retired, more confirmed in his previous opinion; and the breach, instead of being closed, was widened. At the same time, Dowdal felt himself perfectly secure in his opposition: as, from the Liturgy not having yet been sanctioned by Act of Parliament, he was not guilty of offence against any law. To punish his obstinacy, however, another expedient was adopted; which, though it may appear ridicu-

lous to modern ideas, seems, from the sequel, to have been extremely mortifying.

It had long been a disputed point, whether the See of Armagh, or Dublin, was entitled to precedence. Popes and Councils had been appealed to, and had issued decrees upon the subject. At length an arrangement had been made and acquiesced in, that each Prelate should be entitled to the dignity of Primate, and should have permission to erect his crosier in the jurisdiction of the other; but that the Archbishop of Dublin should only be styled Primate of Ireland, whilst the Archbishop of Armagh was styled Primate of all Ireland. At this crisis, however, this arrangement was reversed. The King's patent was issued, granting to Archbishop Brown and his successors in the See of Dublin, for ever, the right of precedence over Dowdal and his successors, in the See of Armagh. This mark of displeasure, so mortified Dowdal, that he resolved to relinquish his See; and, considering it as a prelude to greater severities, he departed from the kingdom, and settled upon the Continent. This step being regarded by the Government as a virtual resignation of the Primacy, a successor was forthwith appointed to him in the See of Armagh.

Whilst examples were thus exhibited of violent attachment to the Church of Rome, instances of indiscreet zeal, were likewise manifested on the part of the Reformed Clergy, which must have tended, equally with the former, to retard the work of Reformation. An instance of this kind occurred in the case of John Bale, who, having been long distinguished for unguarded and ill-timed attacks on Popery, was advanced about this crisis, to the Bishopric of Ossory. At his consecration, Lockwood, Dean of Christ's Church, proposed that the Romish ritual should be used, as the people had an aversion to the new Liturgy; and as it had not yet been established by the Irish Parliament. In this suggestion Goodacre, the new Prelate of Armagh, likewise concurred. Bale, however, most obstinately refused to be consecrated in any other manner, than according to the form prescribed in the new Liturgy. After the consecrated wafer was prepared for the communion, he caused it to be removed, and common bread to be substituted. Even some of the Reformers were offended at this conduct, whilst the Popish party regarded him with horror and aversion. The firmness of Bale, and his learning, which, making allowance for the times, was considerable, might, in a proper sphere, have been most useful to the cause of reformation. But in Ireland, they could effect little, as the people were not in a condition to profit by them. His conduct insulted their prejudices, without en-

lightening their understandings. It was, indeed, like most of the measures of Government respecting reform, arbitrary and dictatorial. So much was he disliked, that five of his servants were, on one occasion, killed before his face, and his own life was with difficulty saved by the interference of the Magistracy.

The death of Edward VI., which took place in 1553, after a reign of seven years, put a stop to these proceedings. All the efforts which had been hitherto so unsuccessfully made to introduce the Reformation into Ireland, were, for a period, suspended by this event.—From the sketch now given, it may be deduced as a general principle, that religious Reformation is not likely to succeed, among a people in a rude and barbarous state. As Christianity was published originally, at an era distinguished for mental exertion, and the cultivation of the intellectual powers, so it is always likely to be best received, and to produce its best effects, among a people in a state of civilization. To communicate the refined and sublime system of the Gospel where it is not, or to reform any perversions of it, it is necessary, if the people intended to be converted be in a state of ignorance, to dispel that ignorance, and along with religion to communicate the useful arts. This principle was acted upon with energy and perseverance by the early Scottish Reformers, and their splendid success is the best illustration of its utility. Inattention to this principle, retarded for a long period the progress of the Reformation in Ireland.

F.

THE WRITINGS OF BOCCACCIO.

NO. III.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DECAMERON.

IN adverting to the DECAMERON OF BOCCACCIO, our attention was arrested by the very commencement of the Introduction, where a vivid and affecting picture of the Plague is presented, which we compared with similar descriptions of that dreadful malady, in other writers. The plague is introduced as furnishing the occasion for narrating the stories; in consequence of a number of young ladies and gentlemen withdrawing to the country, to avoid its dangers, and forget its horrors, amid beautiful scenery and various amusements, of which story-telling was the chief. The account of their rural retreat has been generally admired, as forming a kind of frame-work for the stories, at once original, elegant, and appropriate. If the idea of such a frame-work did not ori-